



Serving Immigrant Families through Two-Generation Programs: Identifying Family Needs and Responsive Program Approaches

Posted on 08/01/2017

By addressing the needs of poor or low-income parents and their children simultaneously, two-generation programs have great potential to uplift whole families and break cycles of intergenerational poverty. Generally speaking these programs seek to weave together high-quality early learning opportunities for children with initiatives directed at their parents, including adult education, workforce training, parenting skills, and other supports that strengthen family stability and thereby improve the children's chances of lifelong success.

Immigrant parents lead an increasingly large proportion of U.S. families with young children living in poverty, making them an important target of the two-generation field. However, many of these parents have specific characteristics including limited English proficiency and low levels of formal education that require the use of tailored approaches in order to support the success of their families.

Little research is available about the efforts of two-generation programs to successfully serve immigrant and refugee families. To help fill this gap, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy conducted an analysis of sociodemographic characteristics of U.S. parents with young children and a study of select two-generation programs serving large numbers of immigrant and refugee families. Together, these quantitative and qualitative analyses make plain a wide range of challenges and opportunities facing the two-generation field as it seeks to appropriately serve and improve outcomes for the large and growing number of immigrant families with young children in the United States.

Two-generation approaches have enormous potential to positively affect the educational and other outcomes of immigrants and their young children. This report identified difficulties faced by many programs that strive to be responsive to the unique and intensive needs of these families. Investments in foundational English language, literacy, and parenting classes are being challenged. The programs and analysis included in this study provide important lesson for policymakers and community stakeholders alike. The range and intensity of immigrant families' needs must be considered to ensure that these families benefit equitably from two-generation services.

Source: [Migration Policy Institute](#)